

Getting to Know the Bride: Skaff's Secrets for Success

"Every bride is different, but all should be treated with equal respect," Skaff said, adding that — regardless her budget or style — her wedding is of magnanimous importance "and she's counting on you to get it right." Here are his three rules of engagement for matrimonial bliss.

Listen. "It's such simple advice, but not put into practice nearly enough," Skaff said. Resist the urge to immediately pitch a look *you're* comfortable with "and really try to figure out what *she* likes," he said. As soon as she walks in the door, take note of what she's wearing (Is it tailored? Girly? Edgy? Does she like to accessorize?) to size up her style. Skaff asks her all the pertinent details (dress, venue, colors, number of attendants) and looks through her inspiration photos in entirety before offering any suggestions.

Educate. Once she's spilled all her hopes and dreams without interruption, you can — and should — go in and help her hone her vision. "If she has inspiration images that are all over the place, start grouping the ones that go together," Skaff said. "Explain to her why certain images match a particular theme but another doesn't fit." Highlighting inconsistencies helps her understand her style so she can decide what direction she'd like to go. "It's the difference between a wedding that looks haphazard and a wedding that looks amazing," he said.

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